

Remarks at American Legion Distinguished
Service Medal Ceremony

William H. Webster

Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C.

March 1, 1988

Thank you very much, past National Commander Dean*, ladies and gentlemen.

I am deeply honored to receive this award. I know that it is not lightly given, and I feel very humbled to join the list of distinguished people who have received it. I am especially appreciative considering the tremendous service that I know that all of you have given in time of war or national emergency.

Just four years ago, I was attending a meeting in Luxembourg. They were celebrating the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Luxembourg by American forces. And so our American ambassador, who had served as the head of intelligence for General Patton, took me outside Luxembourg to a churchyard where the people of Luxembourg had erected a very simple, plain memorial. Flowers were there, and the inscription was in the Luxembourg dialect, which he translated for me—a very simple message. "Because you were strong, we live in freedom."

It is my firm view that no great nation can remain strong unless it has an effective law enforcement system to protect itself from within, an effective intelligence system to understand the capabilities and intentions of our adversaries, and a strong military service to defend our nation and its citizens.

It has been my privilege to serve in each of these three services of our country, and I have observed the unremitting, consistent support that the American Legion has given to law enforcement, to intelligence, and to national defense. So I accept this honor with great gratitude and with thanks to all of you for what you have done and for what you continue to do to keep America safe and free.

Thank you.

* James P. Dean, past national commander of the American Legion.